This Man Was Born With Pop Eyes

This Man Acquired Them Late in Life

The Pop-Eyed Man, His Life and Habits

Drawings by Guy Pene du Bois

HE IS of the primates, the order of mammals, this bulbous creature with hands pudgily adapted to the acquisition of banknotes. Close observation reveals him indeed as the final effort of evolution, a member of the old proud pageant of man, though his hippopotamus eyes seem to relate him more nearly to the Ungulata, or Hoofed Mammals. He is not to be found frequently among the cherished abiding places of men; neither the tennis court nor the golf course answers to his tread; he knows not the litheness and verve of swimming, nor could he with safety enter a canoe. But in certain favored haunts, luminous with incandescents and prodigal with fluttering tuxedoed waiters, he and his fellows move flashily and corpulently on. They sit at corner tables opposite stridently fair young things, who gurgle in glee at their puffing witticisms and smirk appreciatively as they splutter their orders for wine. The waiters know the Pop Eyed Man and hear in his crackling laugh the prophecy of a top notch tip.

He is rarely seen before the late hours of the afternoon, though he can occasionally be found as early as noon peering with watery eyes at the ticking tale of the stocks. Some investigators hold that he is not a real species at all, but that in his early stages he is even as other men; that his bulging eyes and rolling flesh are the acquired characteristics of long years of joie de vivre, of heavy dinners and light living with those whose business it is to be obtrusively young.

One Touch of Nature

By Else Krafft

The story which follows is a story of the triumph of a woman's humane impulse over the hatreds engendered by war. It is not a pure impulse of compassion that triumphs—not an irreducible feminine instinct—as was the case in Count Eduard Keyserling's little masterpiece, "Simone," which appeared in The Tribune Sunday Magazine of June 11 last.

The motive here is somewhat more personal and self-interested. It is the realization by a wife and mother, with a husband at the front, that he, too, may be standing in direst need of help within the enemy's lines, which prompts her to go to the rescue of a French soldier wounded in the fighting in one of the cities of southwestern Alsace. Such considerations should have weight with all reasonable and right-minded persons, even in war time. But war too frequently banishes reason, and in the extraordinary vindictiveness and savagery of the present war the rule "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you" has been honored much more in the breach than in the observance.

The touch of nature which this story discloses and lays stress on—its sanity and wholesomeness of feeling—are therefore all the more agreeable and commendable. The spirit of humanity still lives beneath the surface of war's ruthlessness and passion.

THE fighting in the streets, the squares and the open spaces of the little town had ceased.

The French were driven back in wild rout through the wooded hills. The thunder of the cannon had died away, and only scattering shots now and then from the border of the woods told the inhabitants that the pursuit of the enemy continued.

Frau Hanna Büdenkamp, who, with her children at her side, had knelt long in ardent prayer, raised her head now and then and listened.

After the candle had burned down and the last ray of sunlight had vanished outside the iron-barred cellar window one could hardly see his hand before his face. But the children no longer shrieked and wept. They merely clung tight, still frightened and trembling, to her skirt. The grandfather, who in the first hours of the battle had prayed aloud or every now and then spoken cheeringly and reassuringly to his daughter, had now fallen asleep and sat crumpled up in a corner, surrounded by wine casks and bottles.

The young wife felt for him in the gloom and shook his shoulder.

"Grandfather, there is no more firing in the city. Wake up, grandfather!"

But it was a long time before the old man fully understood her. Drunk with sleep, he stumbled up, opened the cellar door and listened for signs of life or movement upstairs. As all was still in the barred and bolted house, he shuffled up the steps, looked into the kitchen and the adjoining rooms and, finding nothing, called his daughter and the grandchildren up out of their hiding place.

Unsteadily the three stole up the creaking stairs into the lighted sleeping room, where Frau Hanna at once put the children in their beds. In their exhaustion they had forgotten hunger and thirst. Again and again she kissed their round, tear-stained faces. That night she said their evening prayer alone. Only the grandfather, who sat breathing heavily in his armchair, mumbled a few words in accompaniment, his white head sunk on his breast and his eyes half shut.

"And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass"——

By that time he was again sound asleep.

The young wife shook herself together with a violent effort, being also on the point of yielding to her overpowering fatigue. She took a few steps toward the bureau, where stood a picture of her husband, who for weeks had been fighting somewhere at the front. Sobbing, she gazed at the smiling face under the glass.

"Franz!" she called, helplessly.

But her outstretched arms remained empty. Her timid cry echoed back to her. She was all alone in her great fear and need.

She had strength enough to open the door which led back into the kitchen and to shut it again softly. Then she sank unconscious into a chair which stood near by, striking her head hard against its thick wooden back. How long she sat there she could not tell. A current of cool night air came in from somewhere—and the rustling noise of the trees in the garden, which lay just beyond the kitchen.

The feeling that a door must have been left open finally roused the young wife. And there—there—what was that that forced her to turn her head with a start? A groan, loud and agonizing—of a sort which she was sure she had never heard before. It rose above the murmur of the wind, the rustling of the trees, the far-off echo of footsteps and the dull noises from the inner part of the town, from which the French had been driven after hours of fighting.

Frau Hanna was suddenly herself again, strong and fresh. Down there in the garden somebody lay wounded—her neighbor, perhaps, who had ventured out of his house too soon—the neighbor's wife—or a friend—a relative from the town, who knew that she had stayed in the suburb alone with her children and her old father, and wanted to look after her and help her. And he had been struck by those terrible missiles—perhaps shot down by some retreating Frenchman whose path he had crossed.

Oh, how she hated those enemies, with their pale, black-bearded faces and their dark, malicious eyes!

But now they were gone—driven roughly out by the incoming German soldiers. The town was German again—safely German. Good God, it must remain German unless all that was right and holy was a deception and a lie!

The young wife straightened up her tired body and brushed the dishevelled blond hair out of her face. A half an hour before she had trembled in fear and horror of the French invaders. Now as the groaning down below grew stronger and stronger she no longer felt any fear.

She stepped into the kitchen, crossed the floor and loosened the bolts of the heavy house door, which opened into the garden.

There everything was still, except for the bleating of the two goats in the stable which they had forgotten to milk. High up over the trees the moon floated and the stars shone.

A smell of smoke was in the air. From over there where the broad main street of the town ran came a sound like the rattle of wheels on the pavement and the flash of scurrying lanterns. Then all was darkness again—pitchy darkness on all sides.

The young wife lighted the stable lantern, still standing upright on the wheelbarrow in which the grandfather had brought yesterday from the meadow the last remnants of forage for the goats. Her fingers trembled—for there—there came once more that fearful groaning. It came from the midst of the old ditched-in pea vine bed, on whose edge stood the tall sunflowers and the gay-colored, long-stemmed asters, whose first blooms she had stuck as a bouquet in the muzzle of Franz's rifle when he went away.

The little wooden gate which led into the garden stood open. Some palings of the side fence were broken. The shrubbery was crushed and the children's little carefully tended flower bed was trodden down.

With her body bent forward the young wife picked her way among the trees, clenching her teeth together and clutching her coat with her hand, as if to force herself ahead into the obscurity. Perhaps it was not her neighbor, or even one of her acquaintances who lay in the garden. Perhaps it was a poor, wounded soldier, one of the city's gallant saviors, who, struck down by a French bullet, had been slowly bleeding his life away.

Frau Hanna lifted the lantern higher as she stood by the uprooted pea vine bed.

A dark body lay there, stretched out at full length. Both hands clutched the damp earth. The eyes were fixed—wide open—black, terrifying eyes. Dishevelled black hair under a képi of foreign make; the blue coat thrown open; below the coat red, flaming red, trousers—almost as red as the blood which showed on the white shirt just over the heart.

Frau Hanna stared, terror-stricken, at the waxen-colored, distorted face. Didn't the arm raise itself? Didn't the hands move menacingly and angrily?

With a cry of alarm she stumbled back, ran through the garden and past the stable. Now, thank God! she was in the house again.

No friend—no German—lay down there. A Frenchman was in her garden, one of the enemy who had brought so much evil on her and on all the others, who had only wished to live in peace.

What had she intended to do when she went so quickly and impulsively out into the garden? To bring help? Yes, she would gladly have given aid to a German. But to a Frenchman—never! He might bleed to death? But to move a hand to save him, so that Germany would have one more enemy—Never!

Frau Hanna grew more excited from minute to minute. She ran into the room where the children slept, where the grandfather still sat motionless on his chair, where the picture of her husband stood on the dressing table, smiling as though there never had been a war—as though he himself were still there.

"Franz!" she pleaded, distractedly.

But he did not answer. She had heard nothing of him for three long weeks. She did not know whether he was hungry or well fed, whether he had a bed to sleep on or was lying stiff and cold in alien soil.

"Franz!" sobbed the young wife.

What happened then all at once? What vision was that which suddenly came to her? By what weird, mysterious mental process could it have been evoked?

A dear, familiar figure, lying wounded unto death. Darkness, terror and loneliness. Alien soil, alien inhabitants, to whom he groaned aloud in his suffering, and who did not hear him—who would not hear him.

"Franz!" cried Frau Hanna for the third time. She cried so loud that the old man in the armchair started up in spite of all his drowsiness and weariness. Even the tired children lifted their heads.

"Papa!" said the smaller one, half dreaming.

The next minute Frau Hanna was standing beside her father and shaking his arm.

"Grandfather, for God's sake, grandfather, don't go to sleep again! There is some one lying down there in our garden, wounded, bleeding to death. He will die if you go to sleep again. Grandfather! Help me! Help me to carry him into the house!"

The old man blinked a couple of times into his daughter's troubled face. Then he hurried with her, as fast as his old legs could carry him. He said nothing and asked no questions. He did not even feel the cold night wind blowing on his haggard, emaciated breast, which had been so often racked with violent spells of coughing. He ran after his daughter to the stable and into the garden, stumbling over shrubbery and roots and rubbing his eyes again and again with his hand, so as to be quite awake and useful. He followed her until she pulled up with a start, gathering her forces together so that she could stand firm, whatever happened.

The wounded man now lay quite still. His groaning had ceased, his eyes were closed. One hand, which before had clutched the earth, was now lifted and held in its stiffened fingers an object which it had half drawn out of the pocket of the opened coat.

"Is—is he—is he dead?" whispered the young wife in alarm.

"Yes, he is dead, grandfather," she cried aloud.

The old man bent over, lowering the stable lantern which he had taken from his daughter's trembling hands.

"Take hold," he said. "The blood is still flowing. No, not that way, Hanna. You must take him by the legs."

She obeyed. The flickering light of the lantern confused her. She no longer saw an alien face with coal black hair—an alien uniform. She saw only blood, that trickled slowly across the breast of a loved one, stained the white skin and ran even to the heart, which seemed suddenly to stop and never, never beat again.

"No," she sobbed; "Merciful God, no! Franz lives. He must live for our sakes."

So she helped her father carry the stranger into the house. Slowly, carefully, step by step through the garden and the paved stable yard. Then up the stairs to the door of the room in which for two nights past her bed had stood unused by the side of her absent husband's.

The grandfather looked up, breathing hard under his heavy, almost lifeless burden. He did not know whether his daughter would permit this half-dead stranger to be carried through that door into her own bedroom.

But she had already pushed the door open with her elbow. Something drove her on, forced her to forget all her antipathy to her alien guest. She knew one thing only: "What you do for this man here, may others do to your husband over there in their country!"

Now the wounded man lay on the wide bed, on which dropped and crumbled the black earth clods which had clung to the cloth of his uniform.

But Frau Hanna did not notice that. Nor did she notice the dust and dirt stains on the body, from which her father had removed the coat in order to look at the wound. The pulse beat still; the heart throbbed weakly. He was not dead yet, the French soldier, who, fleeing and in suffering, had sought refuge in her quiet, peaceful German garden.

Frau Hanna had brought water, bandages and some antiseptics. The old father had more than once bound up a wound and understood thoroughly how to do it.

He washed the unconscious soldier, stemmed the flow of the blood with wadding, speaking no word which betrayed a consciousness that it was an enemy for whom he was performing this truly Good Samaritan service. Had he forgotten that only a few hours ago, down there in the gloomy cellar, he had consigned all Frenchmen to destruction—that he had clenched in anger the hands with which he was going to strangle every Frenchman who might come his way?

Now there was nothing more for Frau Hanna to do.

The father pulled the covers up over the wounded man, laid compresses on his brow and listened again to the beating of his heart.

Near by the children slept in their beds. The night became darker and stiller. The picture of the far-away father smiled under its glass.

The young wife stole silently out of the room. The great excitement under which she had been laboring had quieted down. She bit her teeth together so as not to cry out in the sudden fit of doubt and perplexity which now seized her. She had an enemy in her house! She had perhaps saved his life so that later he might take another's life. Had she done right?

The lantern, still burning, stood on the window case by the stairway, where her father had placed it. And right in front of her, on the uppermost step, lay a strange, black object—the same that the wounded man had held fast in his fingers down there in the garden, and which he had dropped when they carried him upstairs. Frau Hanna bent over and picked it up. It was a pocketbook of scratched, dingy leather, with blood stains on it which were still moist.

The young wife's fingers shook so that the pocketbook fell again to the floor and lay there opened. All sorts of papers slipped out, and at her feet she saw an upturned photograph of two children, who seemed to be about the same age as the two children sleeping in their beds across the way.

Quickly Frau Hanna snatched up the picture. Something was written at the bottom of the white cardboard—quite awkwardly, just as awkwardly as her little boy had scratched "God keep you, dear papa," on the photograph of herself and the children which Franz had smilingly stuck in the pocket of his field gray uniform when he was called away to war.

"Certainly the good God will keep me, children, if I have your picture with me," he had said.

This was also a children's picture. Also a child's handwriting in big, stiff French letters.

The young wife read, spelling it out and sinking her head deeper and deeper over what she read:

"Que Dieu te protège, cher Papa!"

For a while she stood there, unable to comprehend at once all that was passing confusedly through her mind. Then she breathed a deep breath of relief. A smile came into her stern, set face—the first smile in many weeks, warm, motherly and full of love.

So she turned again, softly pushed ajar the door of the room where the old man stood at the bedside of the wounded French soldier holding the outstretched hand which had weakly sought his own.

"He lives," exclaimed Frau Hanna exultantly. "He must live, just as our own German fathers must live, for whose safety their children tremble and pray."

She stepped to the bed, looked into the wide-open, pleading eyes, saw a face haggard from continued privations in the field. She raised the hand in which she held the strange children's photograph, with the foreign inscription: "Que Dieu te protège, cher Papa!"

Quietly she laid the picture on the bed cover and saw how the two waxen-yellow hands grasped it. Then she heard two French children's names weakly spoken. She turned and went out again—to her own children and the smiling photograph of her husband.

There she sank on her knees.

"Franz," she cried out, half laughing, half weeping, "you will live like this father, whom I have kept safe for his children's sake, if God so wills."

The face in the picture smiled on mutely—but proudly and self-confidently, as all our German fighters smile.

A Story of War and a Woman

Translated by William L. McPherson

HOW TO TELL THE WEATHER WITHOUT LEAVING HOME.

OBSERVANT MALE PERSON—It must be getting colder out; the girls are leaving off their furs.